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Ammianus, Jovian, and the Syriac *Julian Romance*[1]

Scholars have not paid much attention to the reign of Jovian (363–364) and the appreciation of his brief rule is in general not particularly positive. At its best Jovian is considered a mediocre emperor whose impact on the empire was not great. Largely responsible for this image is Jovian's contemporary Ammianus Marcellinus, who offers the fullest account of his rule. Other, more favorable information is offered by Christian sources. A diametrically opposed picture of Jovian's reign to that of Ammianus is offered by a text known as the Syriac Julian Romance. *This Christian text of historical fiction, composed most probably in Edessa possibly in the early sixth century, has attracted little scholarly attention. However, this text of Christian polemical character is most interesting for the image it sketches of Jovian, who is presented as the ideal Christian emperor, as well as for the completely pitch-black picture it presents of Jovian's predecessor Julian. In this study the opposite images of Jovian as presented by Ammianus on the one hand and the* Julian Romance *on the other are compared and explained. For Ammianus Julian came close to the ideal emperor whereas Jovian could not live up to his standards of what an emperor should be like; in particular his peace treaty with Shapur II is heavily criticized. The Christian* Julian Romance *reviles Julian and presents Jovian as new Constantine who restored Christianity and concluded peace with Shapur for the higher purpose of freedom of religion for Christians in the Persian Empire.*

The brief reign of the emperor Jovian did not go down into history as a memorable period in late Roman history. Scholars, until recently, have not been particularly positive about Jovian and considered him a mediocrity. Jones, for instance, in his *The Later Roman Empire* even assessed him as "a nonentity . . . a genial and popular young man of a little over thirty."[2]

[1] I would like to thank Noel Lenski for his comments and recommendations on an earlier version of this paper.

[2] A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284–612: A Social Economic and Administrative Survey* (Oxford, 1964), 138.

Opinion became slightly more positive since Wirth in a long, fairly general and somewhat wordy article published in 1984 made an attempt to rehabilitate Jovian's reputation.[3]

Largely responsible for the unenthusiastic image about Jovian is Ammianus Marcellinus, who provides the fullest account of his nearly eight-month rule (25.5–10). This report has long been considered as authoritative and was therefore often reproduced in modern scholarly works.[4] Apart from the brevity of his reign, the authority of Ammianus was undoubtedly one of the reasons why Jovian's reign on the whole has not attracted much scholarly attention. Apart from a not well-known and hard-to-find Italian monograph,[5] there are only chapters and passages in other monographs,[6] a handful of studies on various aspects of his reign, as well as a detailed commentary on Ammianus' account of Jovian's regime.[7] Scholars seem not to have been inspired by Jovian's time in power which is generally considered as an insignificant interlude between Julian's exciting and provocative emperorship (361–363) and the dual rulership of Valentinian I (364–375) and his brother Valens (364–378).[8]

In spite of the little attention paid to his reign in scholarly literature, Jovian's election as emperor, his peace treaty with the Persians at the expense of considerable loss of Roman territory, and his religious policy have led to some discussion. The following study will briefly deal with these events in order to present Ammianus' impression of Jovian's reign and then will continue with the main subject: Jovian's image in the Syriac *Julian Romance,* which is diametrically opposed to that of Ammianus.

[3] G. Wirth, "Jovian: Kaiser und Karikatur," in E. Dassmann, K. Thraede, eds., *Vivarium: Festschrift Theodor Klauser zum 90. Geburtstag* (Münster, 1984), 353–84.

[4] E.g., O. Seeck, *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt*, Bd. IV (Berlin, 1911), 358–71.

[5] R. Soraci, *L'Imperatore Gioviano* (Catania, 1968); also, much earlier, George Hickes, *Jovian, or, An Answer to Julian the Apostate* (London, 1683); Abbé De la Bletérie, *Histoire de l'empereur Jovien et traductions de quelques ouvrages de l'empereur Julien*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1748).

[6] N. Lenski, *The Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 2002), 14–20 and 160–63, discusses Jovian's reign as an overture to that of the Valentinian dynasty; M.R. Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy from Julian to Theodosius* (Chapel Hill, 2006), 18–20, 173–74.

[7] J. den Boeft, J.W. Drijvers, D. den Hengst, H.C. Teitler, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXV* (Leiden, 2005), 169–343. Still of importance is the lemma "Iovianus 1" in *RE* 9 (1916), 2006–11. Very informative also is T. Banchich, "Jovian," in *De Imperatoribus Romanis: An Online Encyclopedia of Roman Emperors*, http://www.roman-emperors.org/startup.htm.

[8] The mere three pages John Curran dedicated to Jovian's reign in his chapter in "From Jovian to Theodosius" in *CAH* 13 is a good example. It mainly follows Ammianus' account without taking notice of the debate on aspects of his time in power.

Ammianus' Image of Jovian

Julian died during his Persian campaign on 27 June 363. The day after his death the generals of the army assembled in order to elect a new emperor (25.5.1–3). Since they were divided into two factions—the officers who had served under Constantius represented by Arintheus and Victor, and the chiefs of the Gauls represented by Nevitta and Dagalaifus—the praetorian prefect Salutius Secundus was put forward as a compromise candidate. He, however, declined on account of old age and ill health. During the delay that followed a few hot-headed soldiers chose Jovian as emperor,[9] dressed him in the purple and presented him to the soldiers. Ammianus mentions that Jovian could claim some consideration because of the services of his father who was a retired *comes domesticorum*.[10] Those in the rearguard of the army, whose column extended over four miles, when hearing some men shouting "Iovianus Augustus" and misunderstanding Julian for Jovian, thought that Julian had recovered from his wound. But when they saw a taller figure dressed in purple they realised what had happened and burst out into tears and laments.

Ammianus' report of Jovian's proclamation as Julian's successor, the fullest we have, has been criticised for being unreliable and a biased overture for an anti-Christian account of Jovian's period as emperor. In particular Von Haehling has argued that Ammianus' account was tendentious, unreliable, and partisan.[11] He was the first to challenge Ammianus' report, which until then was the preferred account of Jovian's election and as such reproduced in the scholarly literature. Von Haehling's view about Ammianus' veracity has received support, e.g. by Barnes and Brennecke.[12] It has also been refuted, however, in particular by Neri, Lenski and the Dutch commentators of Ammianus' Book 25.[13] As the debate now stands Ammianus' account is not considered improbable or untrue, or infused too immoderately with personal prejudice. Ammianus can, however, be blamed for not revealing the identity of the group of men who managed to confer the imperial power on Jovian. It

[9] Amm. 25.5.4: "tumultuantibus paucis . . . Iovianus eligitur imperator."

[10] Amm. 25.5.4: "paternis meritis mediocriter commendabilis."

[11] R. von Haehling, "Ammians Darstellung der Thronbesteigung Jovians im Lichte der heidnisch-christlichen Auseinandersetzung," in A. Lippold, N. Himmelmann, eds., *Bonner Festgabe Johannes Straub zum 65. Geburtstag am 18. Oktober 1977 dargebracht von Kollegen und Schülern* (Bonn, 1977), 347–58.

[12] T.D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca/London, 1998), 139; H.C. Brennecke, *Studien der Geschichte der Homöer: Der Osten bis zum Ende der homöischen Reichskirche* (Tübingen, 1988), 160–61.

[13] V. Neri, "Ammiano Marcellino e l'elezione di Valentiniano," *Rivista storica dell'Antichità* 15 (1985), 153–82; Lenski, "The Election of Jovian and the Role of the Late Imperial Guards," *Klio* 82 (2000), 492–515. For a full discussion of the debate with reference to recent publications, see Den Boeft, et al., *Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXV*, 173–76, 180–85.

is hardly credible that he was not aware who these men were. It has been plausibly suggested by Lenski that they were imperial guardsmen who had served under Jovian's father Varronianus, and/or were serving under Jovian himself, and were acting in response to Julian's attacks on Christians in their ranks.[14] They might also have been, like Jovian, of Illyrian descent, and representing the considerable Illyrian party in the army.

Notwithstanding the fact that Ammianus describes Jovian's sudden rise to imperial power as rather disorderly and tumultuous, even giving the impression that it was a coup d'état, Ammianus never characterizes Jovian's elevation to imperial power as illegal and his reign as illegitimate, as sometimes is supposed.[15] Neither did Jovian come completely out of the blue as is occasionally assumed. He was definitely not an insignificant person at the time of his election. Although he owed part of his reputation to his father, as did also Valentinian I,[16] Jovian himself was not an obscure officer. He held the position of *primicerius domesticorum*—as such he was close to the emperor—after he had presumably made a quick career in the corps of the *domestici*, the elite force of imperial bodyguards. After the death of Constantius II, under whom he had served, Jovian was in charge of the funeral cortège that brought Constantius' remains to Constantinople.[17] Themistius even mentions that he was considered a candidate for the succession of Constantius, and Ammianus himself had predicted his rise to imperial power.[18] Moreover, although Ammianus does not mention it, other sources report that Jovian's election had the consent of the leading generals and common soldiers alike and was therefore undisputed.[19] He was in other words the universal and unanimous choice of the army.

Because of the continuous attacks by the Persian army, the complete lack of supplies the Roman army suffered from because of the Persian scorched earth policy, and the low morale among the Roman soldiers, a peace treaty with Shapur II would have been welcome to Jovian, all the more so because he needed to consolidate his power in particular in the western part of the

[14] Lenski, "The Election of Jovian," 502–15.

[15] E.g., P. Heather, "Ammianus on Jovian: History and Literature," in J.W. Drijvers, E.D. Hunt, eds., *The Late Roman World and Its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus* (London/New York, 1999), 107–08.

[16] Amm. 30.7.4.

[17] Amm. 21.16.21: "imperium cassum et umbratile ut ministro rerum funebrium portendebant." According to Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation*, 139, he was given this honorable duty because he may have been a relative of Constantius.

[18] Them. *Or.* 5.56b; Amm. 21.16.21.

[19] Them. *Or.* 5 65b-66c; Eutr. *Brev.* 10.17.1; Socr. *Hist.eccl.* 3.22; Soz., *Hist.eccl.* 6.3.1; Theodoret, *Hist.eccl.* 4.1.1; Zos. *Hist.nov.* 3.30.1; *Chron.pasch.* s.a. 363; Photius 484b. Den Boeft, et al., *Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXV*, 181–82.

empire.[20] Surprisingly, the Persians made the first move in order to come to an agreement (25.7.5). Ammianus, however, considers the ultimate treaty as shameful (25.7.13). In exchange for an unopposed withdrawal Rome had to surrender fifteen fortresses including the important city of Nisibis and five transtigritane regions—Arzanena, Moxoena, Zabdicena, Rehimena, Corduena—that had belonged to Roman territory since 299.[21] Ammianus blames Jovian for what he considered a humiliating peace agreement. He considers Shapur to have been still frightened by the Roman presence and the Roman army still superior, and argues that there was still the option of a safe retreat, and that in any case it would have been better to fight instead of to capitulate. Moreover, Jovian was, according to Ammianus, more concerned with establishing and safeguarding his own position (25.8.8–12), for which reason he wanted to return to Roman territory as quickly as possible. The newly made emperor, however, considering the situation the Roman army was in, probably had no other option than accepting the Persian terms in order to get himself and his soldiers back safely to Roman territory anyhow. It seems therefore that Ammianus' account of the peace treaty is dictated by his wish to blame Jovian for a treaty he himself considered in every respect disgraceful. He deliberately ignores the fact that Jovian became emperor when the Roman army was in a desperate situation and suffering from famine, a situation for which Julian was responsible in the first place. To a considerable extent, therefore, Ammianus' narrative of Jovian's peace treaty seems to be subordinate to the author's need to safeguard Julian's reputation.[22]

Ammianus does not give a report of the practicalities of the surrender of the transtigritane regions and the fortresses. An exception is made for the cession of Nisibis, the most important Roman bulwark in the east, in a rather elaborate and dramatic account (25.9). The presence of Jovian himself and his passive behaviour may have been Ammianus' motive presenting it. When they heard that their city had been surrendered, the people of Nisibis feared Shapur's anger for the losses he had suffered in his attempts to take the city, and put their hope in Jovian. The emperor, however, did nothing to help the Nisibenes. After the Persian flag was raised on the top of the citadel, the

[20] Errington (*Roman Imperial Policy*, 46) argues that Jovian had set his priority on the west because of Julian's neglect of that part of the empire after he had moved to the east in 361; see also M. Raimondi, *Valentiniano I e la scelta dell' Occidente* (Alexandria, 2001), 41–45.

[21] R.C. Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy: Formation and Conduct from Diocletian to Anastasius* (Liverpool, 1992), 24–30. For an explanation of the details of the treaty, see Den Boeft, et al., *Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXV*, 233–39, with references to relevant sources and recent studies on the subject.

[22] G. Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin. Recherches sur la construction du discours historique dans les* res gestae (Paris, 1978), 493–95; Heather, "Ammianus on Jovian," 108, 111.

Nisibenes were commanded to leave their homes to be sent in exile. Ammianus reports that they left their city in tears while lamenting loudly, that the roads were filled with people carrying as many of their personal belongings as they could and that they were going wherever they could find refuge (25.9.6). After the handing over of Nisibis (on 20–21 August), Jovian went from that city via Edessa to Antioch where he arrived on 22 October. In the beginning of November he continued via Tarsus, where he paid his respects to Julian and "adorned his tomb,"[23] to Ancyra where he arrived sometime in December. In Ancyra he assumed the consulship on 1 January with his baby son Varronianus as his colleague. In February he continued his journey westward to Constantinople. Before reaching the capital, he died in the village of Dadastana on 17 February 364 at the age of 33 either of poisonous fumes or indigestion.

Throughout his account Ammianus sketches a not particularly favorable picture of Jovian. Although he accuses Fortune in the first place for snatching the helm of state from the hands of the experienced steersman Julian and entrusting it to the untried youth Jovian (25.9.7), Ammianus is evidently biased against him. Jovian was an inexperienced soldier, was responsible for a disgraceful capitulation to the Persians which did not have its comparison in the history of Rome, and he let the establishment of his own position prevail to that of the state. Moreover, he was of mediocre erudition. *Paideia* was a quality Ammianus valued highly in emperors and men in high positions and Jovian clearly did not live up to his standards.[24] In a nutshell: according to Ammianus Jovian lacked the superiority to be an emperor and was of second-rate stature, in particular in comparison with Julian.[25] Possibly Ammianus was also biased towards Illyrians,[26] for which his Antiochene origin may be accountable: the criticism of Jovian by the people of Antioch for claiming victory over the Persians may have had an element of disdain for this upstart Illyrian.[27]

[23] Amm. 25.10.5. For Julian's tomb: M.J. Johnson, *The Roman Imperial Mausoleum in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2009), 103–04.

[24] For Ammianus and *paideia* as a basic quality of statesmen, see my "The Decline of Political Culture: Ammianus Marcellinus' Characterization of the Reigns of Valentinian and Valens," in D. Brakke, D. Deliyannis, E. Watts, eds., *Shifting Cultural Frontiers in Late Antiquity* (Farnham, forthcoming).

[25] Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation*, 141. At 138 Barnes remarks: "Ammianus' verdict on Jovian is simple: he was never really emperor at all." G. Kelly, *Ammianus Marcellinus. The Allusive Historian* (Cambridge, 2008), 97–98, 303 ff., argues correctly that Julian was still formidably present *post mortem* and that the deeds of his Illyrian successors Jovian, Valentinian, and Valens were played off against those of the exemplary Julian.

[26] Ammianus' assessment of the reigns of Valentinian and Valens, both Illyrians, was far from positive: Drijvers, "The Decline of Political Culture."

[27] Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 17–18.

Apart from the remark that Jovian was of Christian conviction, Ammianus has nothing to say about Jovian's religion and religious policy.[28] For this we have to turn to other sources. The church historians inform us that he was of homoousian conviction,[29] but it may well be that he lacked the knowledge for distinguishing between the various Christian doctrines and understanding the religious controversies of his day.[30] Unlike his predecessor, Jovian was not a religious fanatic. He seems to have pursued a lenient religious policy and there are good reasons for supposing that Jovian was in favor of toleration between Christians and pagans.[31] In his oration delivered for the occasion of Jovian's consulship on 1 January 364 in Ancyra, Themistius pleads for variety and diversity, as well as for religious tolerance which is in fact one of the key themes of the address. This is not to say that Jovian allowed every pagan practice—in particular magic arts and possibly blood sacrifice were not permitted[32]—but he clearly did not suppress paganism.[33] As to Christian doctrine he supported Athanasius, who immediately after Jovian's accession had set off to meet the new emperor. Doctrines deviant from the Nicene faith were rather rudely dismissed by the emperor who at the same time somewhat paradoxically expressed his wish for harmony and peace within the church.[34]

Jovian received a much better press from Christian authors than from Ammianus. Gregory Nazianzus, for instance, considers him a suitable successor of Julian and praises his courage in situations of war.[35] The peace treaty with Shapur in Christian writings is presented more favorably than in Ammianus' *Res Gestae*. Although the terms of the peace were not honorable, that is explained by the dire straits the Roman army found itself in.[36]

[28] Amm. 25.10.15: "Christianae legis itidem studiosus."

[29] Socr. *Hist.eccl.* 33.22, 24–26; Soz. *Hist.eccl.* 6.3–5; Theodoret *Hist.eccl.* 4.1–4.

[30] L.W. Barnard, "Athanasius and the Emperor Jovian," *Studia Patristica* 21 (1989), 384–89, at 387. On Jovian's religious policy, see Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer*, 164 ff.

[31] E.g., P. Heather, D. Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire in the Fourth Century: Select Orations of Themistius* (Liverpool, 2001), 154–58; cf. J. Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court: Oratory, Civic Duty, and Paideia from Constantius to Theodosius* (Ann Arbor, 1995), 149–53.

[32] Socr. *Hist.eccl.* 3.24.5–6.

[33] Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court*, 148–54; Heather, "Ammianus on Jovian," 112; Heather, et al., *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire in the Fourth Century*, 154–58; Den Boeft, et al., *Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXV*, 338–39; Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy*, 173.

[34] Barnard, "Athanasius and the Emperor Jovian"; T.D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius. Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), 159–60.

[35] Greg.Naz. *Or.* 5.15.

[36] Socr. *Hist.eccl.* 3.22.6–7; Soz. *Hist.eccl.* 6.3.2; Theodoret, *Hist.eccl.* 4.2.1–3; Oros. *Hist. adv.pag.* 7.31.1–2. Eutr. *Brev.* 10.17 describes the peace settlement as necessary but shameful. The ignobility of the peace is also mentioned by Festus 29. Probably we have to do here with the official position of Valens' administration, which wanted the Roman-Persian peace treaty to be represented in a negative way; Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 190–91.

Several Christian, but also non-Christian, sources report that Jovian confessed his faith before Julian. When a military tribune, he was given the option by Julian of either sacrificing or resigning his rank in the army. Jovian refused to sacrifice because of his Christianity and chose to lay down his commission. Julian, however, pressed by the urgency of war, did not let him go.[37] Another interesting story related by the ecclesiastical historians is that Jovian declined to become the successor of Julian because, being a Christian, he did not want to command an army consisting of pagans. Thereupon the soldiers replied that they were also Christians.[38]

Apart from the peace treaty with Shapur II, which had long-lasting consequences,[39] Jovian's reign hardly had any impact on the history of the Roman Empire. His period in office was too short to have any long-lasting significance on, for instance, the religious situation within the empire. Would he have strived for religious tolerance in the vein of Themistius or would he have returned to a situation before the time of Julian? It is therefore all the more surprising that we have a source which portrays Jovian as a crucial figure in Roman late antique affairs as well as presenting him as an exemplary Christian emperor, who restored Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire and who embodied the idealized view of Christian imperial rule. That source is the so-called *Julian Romance*. The following will discuss Jovian's image as it is presented in the *Julian Romance*, an image that is in conspicuous contrast to that of Ammianus.

The Julian Romance

Fed by the fear of the revival of the traditional cults at the expense of Christianity, Christian reactions to Julian's reign were vehement, in particular in the eastern part of the empire where no doubt his anti-Christian measures were felt more directly than in the western provinces. The east was also directly confronted with the consequences of the disastrous Persian campaign. The peace settlement with Shapur, in spite of its necessity, must have been not only a tremendous shock to public opinion and Roman self esteem, but also had an immediate effect on the populations of eastern cities and regions that had to

[37] Socr. *Hist.eccl.* 3.13.1–4, 3.22.2; Eun. *frg.* 29.1 (Blockley); *Suda* I 401; Photius 484a; Theoph. *Chron.* AM 5855; N. Lenski, "Were Valentinian, Valens and Jovian Confessors for Julian the Apostate?," *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 6 (2002), 253–76.

[38] Socr. *Hist.eccl.* 3.22.2; Ruf. *Hist.eccl.* 11.1; Soz. *Hist.eccl.* 6.3.1; Theodoret, *Hist.eccl.* 4.1.4–6.

[39] In fact, the consequences were on the whole positive. The peace settlement restored the balance of power between the two empires, which had been distorted by the treaty of 298/9 CE, and introduced a long period of relative peace and stability. Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy*, 30; Den Boeft, et al., *Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXV*, 246.

be handed over to the Persians. Many people were forced to leave their homes and settle elsewhere, as Ammianus dramatically describes in the case of the inhabitants of Nisibis.[40]

Christian intellectuals were on the verge of traumatization by Julian's attempt at re-paganizing the empire. Shortly after his death, polemical writings against the emperor appeared. *Orations* 4 and 5 by Gregory of Nazianzus were among the first writings directed against Julian.[41] Gregory's extreme hostility towards Rome's last pagan emperor was repeated in other Greek Christian writings, among them the fifth-century ecclesiastical histories. Julian's reign not only provoked vehement reactions by Greek Christian authors, but also in Syriac literature the pagan ruler was described in extremely negative terms. Ephrem Syrus, who was forced to leave his native Nisibis because of the peace settlement and move to Edessa, wrote his *Hymns against Julian* in 363/4, which breathe a vehement abhorrence to Julian and his reign.[42] After Ephrem had set the tone, later Syriac writings regularly refer to Julian in hateful terms.[43] Probably the fiercest polemical work against Julian in the Syriac-speaking regions was the *Julian Romance*.

The *Julian Romance* was first brought to scholarly attention by the German orientalist Nöldeke in 1874. He presented an extensive summary of the text based on the lone manuscript (ms BL 14.641) and dealt with several fundamental issues such as the date, author, original language, and place of origin of the text, and characterized the text a romance.[44] A few years later the complete Syriac text was published by Hoffmann.[45] In 1928 Gollancz published an English translation, which is still the only translation available.[46] Only in the 1980s new, albeit modest, interest, in the *Julian Romance* arose again which produced new views on various aspects of the text.[47] The text

[40] Amm. 25.9.5–6.

[41] See e.g. J. Bernardi, *Les invectives contre Julien de Grégoire de Nazianze*, in R. Braun, J. Richer, eds., *L'empereur Julien. I. De l'histoire à la légende (331–1715)* (Paris, 1978), 89–98; J. McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography* (New York, 2001), 119 ff.

[42] E.g., S.N.C. Lieu, *The Emperor Julian. Panegyric and Polemic* (Liverpool, 1989^2), 89–128.

[43] R. Contini, *Giuliano imperatore nella tradizione Siriaca*, in U. Criscuolo, ed., *Da Costantino a Teodosio il Grande: Cultura, società, diritto* (Naples, 2003), 119–45.

[44] Th. Nöldeke, "Über den syrischen Roman von Kaiser Julian," *Zeitschrift des deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 28 (1874), 263–92.

[45] J.G.E. Hoffmann, *Iulianos der Abtrünnige: Syrische Erzählungen* (Leiden, 1880). Selections of the *Romance* were published by R.J.H. Gottheil, *A Selection from the Syriac Julian Romance* (Leiden, 1906).

[46] H. Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate: Now Translated for the First Time from the Syriac Original* (Oxford, 1928). A new English translation is being prepared by Emmanuel Papoutsakis for the Liverpool series Translated Texts for Historians.

[47] M. van Esbroeck, "Le soi-disant roman de Julien l'Apostat," in H.J.W. Drijvers, et al., eds., *IV Symposium Syriacum 1984: Literary Genres in Syriac Literature*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta

is of importance for the understanding of later Syriac literature but also for the reception of Julian's reign and the image which was created of the pagan emperor in the eastern part of the Roman Empire. Surprisingly, however, studies on Julian never refer to this source.[48]

The *Julian Romance* is a work of historical fiction. The narrative is divided into three parts. The first part reports how Julian took over the government from the Christian-loving emperors Constantine and his son, and that he reopened temples, built altars, and ordered that the images of the gods be worshipped. In addition, he started a persecution of the Christians but was opposed by Eusebius, bishop of Rome, who through his perseverance eventually prevailed over Julian.[49] This part of the fictitious narrative is fragmentary and incomplete, and is only some two to three pages long.

The second part, which might be called "History of Eusebius," tells at considerable length (some 55 pages in Gollancz's translation) about Julian's many vain attempts to have the ninety-seven-year-old Mar Eusebius, bishop of the city of Rome, renounce his Christianity and become a venerator of the old gods.[50] The senators and people of Rome, except for the pagans and Jews, support Eusebius; they furthermore refuse to recognise Julian's rule, and ask for religious tolerance. Julian intends to sacrifice Eusebius at a festival for the gods. When Eusebius is brought forward, he blames Julian for

229 (Rome, 1987), 191–202; G.J. Reinink, "The Romance of Julian the Apostate as a Source for Seventh Century Syriac Apocalypses," in P. Canivet, ed., *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam: Actes du Colloque international, Lyon-Paris 11–15 Septembre 1990* (Damascus, 1992), 75–86; repr. in Idem, *Syriac Christianity under Late Sasanian and Early Islamic Rule* (Aldershot, 2005); H.J.W. Drijvers, "The Syriac Romance of Julian: Its Function, Place of Origin and Original Language," in R. Lavenant, ed., *VI Symposium Syriacum 1992*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 247 (Rome, 1994), 201–14; A. Muraviev, "The Syriac Julian Romance and its Place in the Literary History," *Khristianskii Vostok* 1(7) (1999), 194–206; J.W. Drijvers, "The Syriac Julian Romance. Aspects of the Jewish-Christian Controversy in Late Antiquity," in H.L.J. Vanstiphout, et al., eds., *All those Nations . . . : Cultural Encounters within and with the Near East: Studies Presented to Han Drijvers at the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Groningen, 1999), 31–42; S.P. Brock, A. Muraviev, "The Fragments of the Syriac Julian Romance from the Manuscript *Paris Syr. 378*," *Khristianskii Vostok* 2(8) (2001), 14–34; J.W. Drijvers, "Julian the Apostate and the City of Rome: Pagan-Christian Polemics in the Syriac *Julian Romance*," in W.J. van Bekkum, J.W. Drijvers, A.C. Klugkist, eds., *Syriac Polemics: Studies in Honour of Gerrit Jan Reinink*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 170 (Louvain, 2007), 1–20; J.W. Drijvers, "The Emperor Jovian as New Constantine in the Syriac Julian Romance," *Studia Patristica* 45 (Louvain, 2010), 229–33; P. Wood, *"We have no King but Christ": Christian Political Thought in Greater Syria on the Eve of the Arab Conquest (c. 400–585)* (Oxford, 2010), ch. 5, 'The Julian Romance'; J.W. Drijvers, "Religious Conflict in the Syriac *Julian Romance*," in P. Brown, R. Lizzi Testa, eds., *Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire (IVth-VIth Century A.D.): The Breaking of a Dialogue: Proceedings of the International Conference at the Monastery of Bose (October, 20th-22nd 2008)* (Berlin, 2011), 131–62.

[48] The only exception is K. Rosen, *Julian: Kaiser, Gott und Christenhasser* (Stuttgart, 2006), 399.

[49] Hoffmann, *Iulianos der Abtrünnige*, 3–5; Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 7–9.

[50] Hoffmann, *Iulianos der Abtrünnige*, 5–59; Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 10–65.

not attending to more urgent matters such as the war with Persia while the emperor accuses Eusebius of being mad and having an impure belief. After several failed attempts to execute Eusebius, who is protected by the hand of God, Julian leaves Rome disillusioned and angry for his military expedition against Persia. Eusebius prophesies the emperor's death in this campaign as an act of God's justice.

The third part of the *Romance*, the "History of Jovian," is the longest of the three—some 200 pages in the translation by Gollancz.[51] It tells the story of Julian's journey from Rome via Constantinople, Antioch, Harran, and Nisibis to Persia, in order to wage war on Shapur for the reason that the Persian king had stopped persecuting the Christians. Julian's anti-Christian measures are elaborately described. The other key figure of this narrative is Julian's general and successor Jovian or Jovinian as he is called in the *Romance*. Jovian secretly favors the Christian cause and through the confidence Julian has in him, he is able to restrain the emperor's actions against the church and to come to the help of individual Christians. This part of the *Romance* is, like the "History of Eusebius," characterized by dialogues between Julian and his supporters on the one hand, and Jovian and the emperor's opponents on the other, as well as by the exchange of letters, the contents of which are described, between Julian, Jovian, and others. As in the "History of Eusebius," also in this third part of the Romance Julian not only wants to reintroduce paganism but also seeks recognition of his rule. Whereas he did not receive acknowledgment for his reign from the city of Rome, his rule was ultimately recognised by Constantinople, the second Rome. During the military campaign against Persia, Jovian is in regular contact with Shapur's chief general, Arimhar, who through his communication with Jovian converts to Christianity. When in the fatal campaign Julian is killed by an arrow sent by God, Jovian is made emperor. Both Julian's death and Jovian's emperorship are predicted and are seen as acts of God. Subsequently Shapur and Jovian enter on a peace treaty, which includes the voluntary cession of Nisibis and the eastern provinces to Shapur, together with the cessation of the persecution of Christians in the Sasanid Empire for a period of hundred years. On his return from Persia to Constantinople, Jovian visits Edessa, as a reward for the city's firmness in the faith. The Edessans receive the emperor with great joy, and he amazes everybody, including himself, by performing a healing miracle.

The "History of Jovian" as we have it is generally considered to have been composed in north-Mesopotamian Edessa. Edessa has a special place and is central to the text, and one of the purposes of the text was to emphasise

[51] Hoffmann, *Iulianos der Abtrünnige*, 59–242; Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 66–255.

Edessa as the city of Christ *par excellence* for which reason it deserved a special place in the world of Christendom. The city is presented as "the mother of believers"[52] and as a blessed city, which uniquely of the towns of the east stays firm in its faith, irrespective of Julian's threats to devastate the city and kill its inhabitants. Also the influence of the writings of Ephrem Syrus, in particular his *Hymns against Julian*, the *Doctrina Addai*—the official foundation myth of Christianity in Edessa—on the *Romance*, the animosity towards pagan Harran, and the incorporation of local Edessan tradition (for example, Constantine's letter to Edessa) are reasons to believe that the text was composed in Edessa.[53]

An Edessan origin implies that the *Romance* was originally written in Syriac and not translated from the Greek as has sometimes been supposed.[54] Opinions on the date of composition differ: from the end of the fourth century to the beginning of the sixth.[55] As to the author of the *Romance* we remain in the dark.[56] The same applies to the sources the author must have used. We may assume that the person responsible for the text used a mix of writings for the composition of his work. Apart from his familiarity with the work of Ephrem Syrus and the *Doctrina Addai*, the author probably also used Greek writings such as the ecclesiastical histories. From his acquaintance with Julian's journey and Persian campaign we may surmise that historical sources must also have sat on the author's desk while he composed his invented history. Although we cannot be sure, the author may also have used now-lost narratives about Julian and Jovian circulating in the Syriac-speaking world of his day. Moreover, the text was in all likelihood composed against the background of Roman-Persian tensions of the first decades of the sixth century as well as the emperor Justinian's efforts to have non-Chalcedonian Edessa conform to the doctrines of Chalcedon.[57]

[52] Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 138.

[53] Nöldeke, "Über den syrischen Roman," 283–84; H.J.W. Drijvers, "The Syriac Romance of Julian," 202, 210–12; Muraviev, "The Syriac Julian Romance," 205 ("Edessan background is evident in the Romance").

[54] M. van Esbroeck, "Le soi-disant roman," 196, unfortunately followed by Rosen, *Julian,* 399.

[55] Even though the *Julian Romance* seems to be a single literary piece and reflects unity of style and ideology, i.e. the condemnation of Julian and the glorification of Christianity, it remains a synthesis of three different narrations. It is possible that the three constituent texts of the *Romance* originated independently before they were brought together in a synthetic narrative; Drijvers, "Religious Conflict in the Syriac *Julian Romance,*" 140; Muraviev, "The Syriac Julian Romance," 197.

[56] Muraviev ("The Syriac Julian Romance," 205–06) has suggested that the author was the Persian general Hwarra-mir (Arimhar in Gollancz' translation), with whom Jovian was in regular communication. Xwarrabût is mentioned in Moses of Khorene's *History of Armenia* 2.7 as a scribe of Shapur. Moses reports that Xwarrabût returned with Jovian to the Roman Empire, converted to Christianity and wrote a history of Shapur and Julian.

[57] Wood, *"We have no King but Christ",* 142.

The "History of Jovian" has always been considered the most important part of the *Romance* and is therefore the best studied of the three sections.[58] It is a text of considerable length and complexity. Like the *Julian Romance* as a whole it is about the confrontation between paganism personified in Julian and Christianity represented by Jovian. Jovian is clearly the key figure and hero of the text. The text raises many questions and contains many interesting aspects, such as the role of the Jews, the presentation of cities in connection with Julian's pagan policy, the central role of Edessa in the text, and the function of the text in the theological/christological conflicts of the time,[59] but the focus in the rest of this paper will be on the image presented of Jovian as a foil to that of Ammianus.

Jovian

Whereas Ammianus presents Jovian at his best as a second-rate emperor, the *Julian Romance* gives a completely different portrayal. Jovian is a man of knowledge and sense.[60] As a man of God—he conceals his Christianity from Julian—he is in constant distress about Julian's anti-Christian measures. He frequently prays to God for advice and assistance, and asks God to grant peace to the church. As Julian's main advisor and second man in the empire, he is in regular contact with the emperor by way of personal meetings and the exchange of letters. Jovian is always able to talk sense into Julian and to mitigate the initial harsh anti-Christian measures that the emperor has decided upon. For instance, in the first dialogue of the text,[61] included after Julian had decreed a Christian persecution, Jovian is able to convince the emperor that a policy of persecution is countereffective because the Christians seek death, preferably a martyr's death. Moreover, so argues Jovian, a great number of the soldiers were Christians and killing them would jeopardize the Persian expedition. The destruction of churches was, according to Jovian, also unwise because many of them were former pagan temples; their demolition would not be prudent, because they could be put to good use for honoring the gods. Jovian intercedes regularly with the emperor not only on behalf of the Christians but also on behalf of the Persians. He prevents the captivity of Persian women and children, the killing of men, and the destruction of cities, and he convinces Julian to show mercy to prisoners of war.[62] Jovian

[58] Nöldeke, "Über den syrischen Roman," 264, without sustaining his opinion, considers this part of more importance ("Wichtiger ist die Geschichte Jovians") than the second part about Eusebius and Julian.

[59] See, in general, Drijvers, "Religious Conflict in the Syriac *Julian Romance*."

[60] Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 67.

[61] Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 72–75.

[62] Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 175, 179, 182.

has frequent dreams and visions in which his coming rule and the freedom of religion for Christianity are predicted. Jovian is favored by God and he is an instrument in His plan, which implies Jovian's rule over the empire, the restoration of Christianity, and peace between the Romans and Sassanians.[63] In other dreams the martyr Mercurius prophesies to Jovian that not Julian but Shapur will be victorious, that Julian will meet his end in the Persian campaign by an arrow shot by the same Mercurius, and that Christianity will be restored.[64] In one of his dreams Jovian is also told that Nisibis was to be handed over to the Persians.[65]

The three themes figuring prominently in Ammianus' account of Jovian and the Christian sources—Jovian's election, the peace treaty with Shapur, and his religious policy—also occur in the *Romance*, but in a completely different light. On his deathbed Julian designates Jovian, who was already second-in-command, as his successor on the grounds of his intelligence and because he was the only one who could get the Roman army out of the difficult and dangerous situation they were in.[66] Jovian is also favored by Shapur as Julian's successor, and he makes his preference obvious by way of a letter, which is read to the Roman army.[67] When the assembly of generals and officers has decided in favor of Jovian as their new emperor, Jovian escapes and goes into hiding: his modesty does not allow him to aspire toward imperial dignity but, of more importance, he refuses to be ruler over pagans. When he is finally found, he insists that he will become emperor only on the condition that all soldiers abjure their paganism, become Christians, and adore the sign of salvation, that is, the Cross. The army consents willingly because the larger part was already Christian, and only out of fear of Julian had agreed to his paganism.[68] In a great ceremony, at which the whole army is present, Jovian bows deeply before the Cross,[69] while the royal crown descends and

[63] Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 197, about God's wish for a peaceful existence between the two empires.

[64] Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 153–55, 190. Mercurius is called "one of those forty blessed ones who were martyred in the ice in the time of Maximinian the wicked" (153). St. Mercurius is also referred to in other sources as the killer of Julian; Malal. *Chron.* 13.333–334; *Chron.pasch.* s.a. 363; see further Nöldeke, "Über den syrischen Roman," 287. The author of the "History of Jovian" has the pagan Mercurius, messenger of the Olympian gods, nicely merged with the third-century Christian martyr and the killer of Julian of the same name.

[65] Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 192.

[66] Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 198. The only other source that mentions that Julian had nominated Jovian as his successor is John the Lydian (*De mens.* 4.118).

[67] Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 205–07.

[68] Greg.Naz. *Or.* 4.64–65 reports that there were many Christians among Julian's soldiers; 7,000 of them claimed to have resisted Julian's religious policy.

[69] Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 212. The cross is in this case identical to the *labarum,* which since Constantine's time preceded the army. Remarkably, Julian seems not to have abrogated the custom that the cross-shaped military standard should precede the army; see also Greg.Naz. *Or.* 4.66.

places itself on his head. The soldiers being in complete awe at this miracle cry out: "Henceforth, Christ is our King in heaven, and Jovian is our king on earth."[70] The story of Jovian's elevation manifestly resembles the versions retailed in the church histories, and is evidently the Christian version of Jovian's acceptance of imperial power. Theodoret's version comes closest to that in the *Romance*, but the other ecclesiastical historians have a similar story.[71]

The *Romance* has a quite different explanation of the Roman-Persian peace treaty from that of Ammianus. Soon after Jovian had come to power he entered into a peace treaty with Shapur. Central to the settlement was the fortified city of Nisibis. The city is said to have originally belonged to the Persians and Jovian is therefore more than willing to cede to the Persians what was rightfully theirs, all the more so because, in exchange, liberty of religion for a hundred years was granted to the Christians in the Persian Empire. Apart from religious freedom, Shapur restored the churches, possessions, and relics of martyrs to the Christians in his realm.[72] Jovian's selfishness to have a settlement with Persia at all costs so that he could return to Roman territory to shore up his position as emperor, which we find in Ammianus, is completely absent in the *Romance*. In the latter Jovian's only interest is that of the Christian faith and individual Christians. The surrender of Nisibis, the climax of Roman humiliation for Ammianus, was only a minor concession in exchange for freedom of religion for Christians in the Sasanid Empire.

The author of the "History of Jovian" clearly builds upon the good press Jovian received in the Christian sources. Jovian's Christian confession in front of Julian as mentioned in the ecclesiastical histories (see above) has its parallel in the *Romance*. At one point Julian discovers that Jovian is a Christian and Jovian does indeed confess his Christianity in front of the emperor. Even though Julian initially dismisses him from his service, he is soon again accepted and even promoted.[73] The empire was blessed with an emperor like Jovian who, as Sozomen remarks, restored to the Church and its clergy the

[70] Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 214.

[71] Theodoret, *Hist.eccl.* 4.1.4–6: "Jovian . . . said: 'I am a Christian. I cannot govern men like these. I cannot command Julian's army trained as it is in vicious discipline. Men like these, stripped of the covering of the providence of God, will fall an easy and ridiculous prey to the foe.' On hearing this, the troops shouted with one voice, 'Hesitate not, O emperor; think it not a vile thing to command us. You shall reign over Christians nurtured in the training of truth; our veterans were taught in the school of Constantine himself; younger men among us were taught by Constantius'" (tr. NPNF 3.107–108). See also Ruf. *Hist.eccl.* 11.1; Socr. *Hist.eccl.* 3.22.2; Soz. *Hist.eccl.* 6.3.1; Zon. 13.14.2–4.

[72] "And Nisibis had been given to the Persians for a hundred years together with its provinces on its eastern side. That had been done voluntarily and without compulsion": Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 233.

[73] Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 163–72.

honors and privileges they had been granted by Constantine. The comparison of Jovian to Constantine is an important element in the *Romance*.[74] Reminiscent of Constantine, Jovian has visions and dreams, and like Constantine he honors the Cross.[75] The idealised Christian reign that had started with Constantine and was interrupted by Julian, is restored again by Jovian. The *Romance* emphasises that Jovian "walk[s] in the ways of Constantine."[76] He returns the treasures that Julian had taken from the churches and he restores the tax privileges for the Christian clergy. He writes letters to the churches as well as to other governments regarding the peace of the church, and he orders the release of believers and ends pagan sacrifices.[77] Like Constantine, Jovian gradually develops into a saintly figure, which gives the *Romance* the air of hagiography. Jovian is even able of performing healing miracles. When in Edessa he cures a woman by the name of Maria who had been seriously ill for eight years and prayed for death. Through his prayers, his faith in God, and God's support of him, Jovian is able to heal the woman.[78] Jovian's visit to Edessa again emphasises the return to the time of Constantine. The *Romance* reports that Constantine had visited Edessa too, had blessed the city, and emphasised its unique Christian character in a letter to the Edessan community, a letter which was treasured by the Christians in Edessa.[79]

Another interesting feature of Jovian is that he is portrayed as an easterner.[80] The text emphasizes his excellent connections in Nisibis, particularly with the city's bishop, Valgash, and it becomes evident from the text that he is a native of this city.[81] His relations with the Persians are extremely good and he is held in esteem by them. He exchanges information with Shapur's general Arimhar. After the death of Julian Shapur too recommends Jovian as

[74] Drijvers, "The Emperor Jovian as New Constantine," 232–33.

[75] E.g., Eus. *VC* 1.28–32 about Constantine's vision of the Cross.

[76] Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 252–53.

[77] With these measures Jovian reactivates Constantine's enactments: e.g. CTh 16.2.2.; Eus. *VC* 2.63–73, 3.16–20, 4.8–13, 3.44–45, 4.23. Socr. *Hist.eccl.* 3.24.4–6 and Soz. *Hist.eccl.* 6.3.3–4 mention *inter alia* that Jovian closed pagan temples, prohibited pagan sacrifice, and restored immunities to the churches and clergy that had been granted by Constantine and his sons.

[78] Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 247–51.

[79] Constantine had never visited Edessa and never written a letter to the Edessan Christians. The imagined association with Constantine reflects Edessa's wish for a unique position in the world of Christendom, the "blessed city." The same desire is expressed in the *Doctrina Addai,* which traces the conversion of the city back to the days of Jesus. The idea of Constantine's letter is almost certainly derived from the letter Jesus had allegedly written to Edessa, copies of which were preserved in Edessa as we know e.g. from Egeria's account; *It. Eger.* 19.9.

[80] Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 100, 164.

[81] There are several indications for this. It is said that he had many kinsmen in Nisibis (Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 163, 165); when Julian was looking for Jovian in Nisibis after he been released from his service, only the chief of his tribe Saragdanus knew where he was hiding (169–70); the Nisibenes are called "the children of your [Jovian's] nation" (192).

successor to the Roman throne and the two rulers maintain good relations. Shapur calls Jovian a wise king.[82] The Persian nobles are so impressed by Jovian that they would even like him to become Shapur's deputy, marry a Persian wife, and become heir to the Persian throne.[83] Jovian evidently belongs to the east and he may be seen as a representative of both civilizations: the Roman, which is equal to the Christian world, and the Persian world.[84] If the text is indeed to be seen against the background of Roman-Persian hostilities in the first decades of the sixth century, in particular Justinian's Persian wars, the text probably also expresses the wish for peaceful coexistence between the two superpowers; Jovian is the embodiment of this coexistence. The excellent relations between Jovian on the one hand and Arimhar and Shapur on the other may be the narratological expression of this desire.[85]

The disparity between Ammianus' opinion about Jovian and Jovian's image as pictured in the *Julian Romance* cannot be greater. Whereas the Jovian of Ammianus is in every respect considered an inferior emperor whose election was irregular and his Persian peace treaty a disgrace to Rome, the author of the "History of Jovian" presents his rise to the imperial power as the will of God and a long-wished-for event that saved Rome from the terror of a horrible persecutor. As a person and emperor Jovian is very well respected not only by the Romans but also by the Persians, who even would like him to become their ruler. The peace treaty with Persia, including the cession of Nisibis as described in the *Romance,* is an honorable agreement and to the mutual benefit of Rome and Persia: coexistence between the two empires is reestablished and freedom of religion is ensured. The surrender of Nisibis, the climax of Roman humiliation for Ammianus, was only a minor concession in exchange for religious freedom for Christians in the Persian Empire.

In his post-Julianic books Ammianus without explicitly saying so compares the reigns of Julian's successors with that of Julian himself. Naturally they cannot live up to the standards of Ammianus' hero. In the *Romance* there is likewise a permanent comparison between Julian and Jovian, but in this case Julian cannot live up to Jovian. Julian is presented as a tyrant

[82] Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 220.

[83] Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 227–28.

[84] The Jovian of the *Romance* may be considered as an example of the multicultural character and adaptability which in "historical reality" characterised social relations and conduct in the Roman-Persian frontier zone. Ammianus Marcellinus mentions Antoninus, a merchant who had been in Roman service (18.5), and Cragausius, a "nobilis Nisibenus" (19.9.3–8), who both defected to Persia and continued their life and career without a hitch at the other side of the frontier.

[85] This wish for peace was also expressed by the prophetess Dinosa who was consulted by Julian: "This is the result of your war: peace between the frontiers, reconciliation between the kingdoms. . . . The East and West will be happy, and rejoice that they are at peace through you": Gollancz, *Julian the Apostate*, 160.

looking for recognition of his rule, a brutal persecutor, a man who has no control over his actions, and who is permanently in a rage. Jovian, on the other hand, is wise, in control of himself, and human; he favors the cause of Christianity and is able to mitigate Julian's anti-Christian and other measures. Jovian is the favorite of God, as Constantine was: God planned to have Jovian rule over the empire and make peace between Romans and Persians. For Ammianus Jovian was not the helmsman to steer the ship of state; for the author of the *Julian Romance* he definitely was. Of course it is not in the first place the persons of Julian and Jovian who are played off against one another, but foremost paganism against Christianity. The "History of Jovian," as the *Julian Romance* as a whole, is after all a Christian polemical narrative against paganism (and Judaism). Julian and Jovian are the embodiments of the two religious directions. Paganism is personified by Julian and is considered mad, foolish, wicked, intolerant, licentious, and equivalent to death. Christianity on the other hand is typified in Jovian and stands for wisdom, judiciousness, tolerance, humaneness, and life.

Conclusion

Ammianus Marcellinus' *Res Gestae* and the Syriac *Julian Romance* present contradictory images of the reign of Jovian. Ammianus intended to save Julian's reputation in a world that was rapidly christianizing at the end of the fourth century when he wrote his historical work by describing Jovian as a person unworthy to rule the empire. The *Julian Romance* had the opposite objective, although it was not written with the purpose of saving Jovian's reputation. Its primary goal was to blacken Julian and the Hellenic culture he represented. The *Romance*, and especially the "History of Jovian," however, also serve other purposes. It is meant to emphasize the uniqueness of Edessa as a Christian city of old and its connection with Constantine. It furthermore was composed to provide an explanation and justification for the loss of large parts of the Roman east to the Persians, more particularly the city of Nisibis: Jovian's peace treaty served the higher purpose of freedom of religion for Christians in the Persian Empire. Possibly the text expresses the wish for peace in the Roman-Persian frontier zone, as well as the peaceful coexistence of the populations on both sides of the border. Of greatest importance, however, was that Jovian restored the imperial support of Christianity that had begun under Constantine and was interrupted by Julian. Jovian as the New Constantine had saved the world of Christendom.

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